

REMARKS

Claims 1-73 were previously pending in this application. By this amendment, claims 1-30 and 45-73 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. As a result, claims 31-44 are pending for examination.

In numbered paragraph 1 of the Final Office Action the Patent Office indicates that the Information Disclosure Statement mailed on November 8, 2001 is not of record and should be re-submitted for consideration and to be made of record. The undersigned thanks Examiner Vargot for the courtesy of a telephone conversation on March 3, 2004 in which the Examiner indicated that a photocopy of the Information Disclosure Statement previously mailed on November 8, 2001 could be resubmitted together with a photocopy of the returned-receipt postcard submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement and date stamped by OIPE on January 28, 2002, and that the Examiner would consider the Information Disclosure Statement and the cited reference. The Examiner indicated that because the Information Disclosure Statement cited only a single United States Patent, the cited reference need not be resubmitted. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner fully consider the enclosed Information Disclosure Statement and initial the enclosed form PTO-1449 and then enclose a copy of the initialed form in the next office communication.

In the Final Office Action, the Patent Office indicates that claims 31-44 are allowed. The Patent Office maintains its rejection of independent claim 71 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 5,763,514 to Koike. While the Applicant does not concede the merits of the rejection of independent claim 71 over the above-mentioned patent to Koike and continues to maintain that claim 71 is patentable over Koike for the reasons set forth in Amendment A filed December 27, 2002, the Applicant has chosen, solely for the purpose of expediting issuance of a patent directed to the allowed claims, to cancel herein rejected independent claim 71, without prejudice, disclaimer, and reserving the right to pursue the cancelled subject matter in a continuation application.

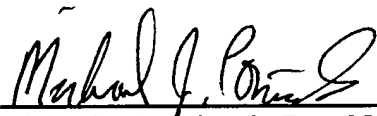
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time.

If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,

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